

Washington State Senator • 34th Legislative District

Erik Poulsen

2002 Legislative Report



A report to the people of the 34th Legislative District, encompassing West Seattle, Burien and Vashon Island.

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Senate Committees:

- Ways & Means
- Rules
- Judiciary
- Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, Vice Chair

Winter 2002

Dear Neighbors,

The legislative session is under way, and I'm honored to now serve the 34th District in the state Senate. Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the House the past several years.

I'm proud to have won an appointment to the Senate's powerful Ways & Means Committee, where I will work to lead Washington out of our budget crisis. I was also named vice chair of the Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines Committee, and will serve on the Judiciary and Rules committees, as well.

While I will no longer serve as co-chair of the House Energy Committee, I remain committed to making sure we secure affordable, abundant energy for generations to come. California's deregulation disaster and the recent Enron debacle are prime examples of why we should continue striving to secure energy independence for Washington.

Our transportation problems will dominate this year's session, and for good reason. Gridlock on our roads is robbing us of time with our families and threatening to drive our economy into a permanent recession. We must act now to relieve congestion, promote transportation alternatives such as the monorail and water taxi, and improve the safety of critical roadways such as the Alaskan Way viaduct.

I will work hard on these and other pressing issues facing our community. As always, I encourage you to contact me with your ideas and concerns.

Best wishes,

A blue ink signature of Erik Poulsen.

Sen. Erik Poulsen

Budget shortfall

Even before the attacks of Sept. 11, Washington began to feel the effects of the national economic slowdown. In the wake of the terrorist attacks, incoming state revenues declined even more sharply. Because of voter-approved initiatives that reduce state revenue, Boeing layoffs, increasing demand for public services, rising public school enrollments and other expenditures, the Legislature now faces a budget shortfall of \$1.25 billion. Every year the Legislature must balance the budget, and this year is no exception.

As the Ways & Means Committee deliberates on how to close the gap, I will be mindful that the state's safety net protects some of our most vulnerable citizens — including the elderly, people with developmental disabilities and the mentally ill. It would be wrong during these difficult economic times to balance the budget on the backs of our neighbors least able to cope without assistance.

We may be able to find additional revenues by reviewing the hundreds of loopholes that linger in the tax code. Business-tax exemptions are initiated with



the promise that they will help create or retain jobs. Too often these loopholes are never evaluated for their return on our investment. As we struggle to balance the books, I will scrutinize these tax breaks to help ensure they are achieving the intended results.

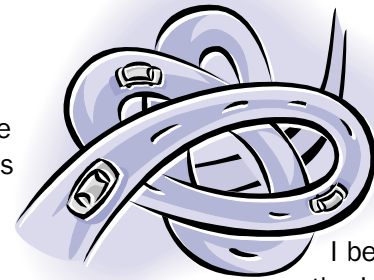
Addressing the transportation crisis

Gridlock continues to strangle Washington's roadways. The cost of traffic delays is staggering — both in hours and dollars — and the problem will only get worse



the longer we delay. In the first week of this session, the Senate passed a series of efficiency bills to help ensure we spend our state's transportation dollars more wisely.

I support Gov. Gary Locke's plan to invest \$8.5 billion by 2012 in new highway lanes, bridges and other transportation improvements. The plan would create more than 20,000 jobs, which will help our economy recover. A reasonable increase in the gas tax of 9 cents per gallon, the first increase since 1991, would fund the improvements. Our roads would be safer, less congested, and travel time for commuters and freight would decrease dramatically.



"I believe it is the Legislature's responsibility to pass a transportation plan in Olympia — we were elected to make these tough decisions."

I believe it is the Legislature's responsibility to pass a transportation plan in Olympia — we were

elected to make these tough decisions.

Consider this: If you drive an average of 12,000 miles per year, and

your car gets roughly 20 miles per gallon, the cost of a 9-cent gas-tax increase would be just 15 cents per day — less than the cost of a daily newspaper.

Local transportation priorities: ferries, Alaskan Way Viaduct

I am disappointed that the governor's plan does not include funding to repair the earthquake-damaged Alaskan Way Viaduct, a critical corridor for West Seattle residents. I will fight to include the project in our statewide transportation proposal and to make sure that our community is permitted to vote on a regional transportation package to fund local priorities such as the monorail.

I've also begun working with the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee to help sustain the ferry system, prevent further cutbacks in

service and preserve reasonable fares. I continue to educate my fellow lawmakers that the ferries are part of our highway system and a lifeline to Island residents. We must keep the system intact!

Protecting our environment

I look forward to serving as vice chair of the Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines Committee. One of my most important responsibilities as a legislator is to be a steward of natural environment for the benefit of public health, recreation and the enjoyment of future generations.

I'm now working to help clean

"I continue to educate my fellow lawmakers that the ferries are part of our highway system and a lifeline to Island residents."

the Department of Ecology moves forward with hazard mitigation efforts, we must pay particular attention to schools, parks and other facilities used by children, who are particularly vulnerable to the arsenic's toxic effects.



I'll also remain ever-vigilant to stop expansion of gravel mining on Maury Island. The island's beaches are the longest

up arsenic contamination caused by a smelter in Tacoma that spewed airborne sediments over Vashon and Maury islands. As

undeveloped shoreline in King County, and the area is a critical herring spawning ground that promotes healthy salmon runs. I am pleased the Department of Natural Resources instituted a protective aquatic reserve around the island. Should the Commissioner of Public Lands or others try to undo this ruling, I will oppose them every step of the way.

"One of my most important responsibilities as a legislator is to be a steward of natural environment for the benefit of public health, recreation and the enjoyment of future generations."

Of course, I will continue to oppose the proposed third runway at Sea-Tac Airport because of the project's potential destruction of the Highline aquifer, wetlands and salmon spawning habitat — not to mention its impact on schoolchildren, property values and our quality of life.





Erik Poulsen

WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR • 34th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

At his swearing-in ceremony on January 8th, newly appointed Sen. Erik Poulsen stands with his three immediate predecessors: Senators Dow Constantine, Mike Heavey, and Phil Talmadge.



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